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DEMOCRATIC

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W. BERLIN – The Debate Continues

The GDR standpoint on the settlement of the West Berlin problem was defined on May 1st by Professor Albert Norden, member of the Politbureau of the Socialist Unity Party, addressing the huge May Day demonstration in East Berlin.

Professor Norden stated:

"What is urgently necessary is that West Berlin should cease to be a centre of danger to the world. To this end, the abolition of the occupation regime in West Berlin is long overdue.

"The form of settlement which we propose would rob the West Berliners of nothing except the fear of war. We are ready to guarantee free access to the Free City of West Berlin. We have shown our great readiness to compromise by agreeing to the establishment of an International Arbitration Commission to settle any differences which might arise with regard to traffic on the access routes to and from West Berlin.

"Naturally such a commission would not be able to exercise any administrative functions on the territory of the GDR, since our state is a free and sovereign state, which could not tolerate any intervention in its internal affairs."

Commenting at length on the West Berlin problem, the Soviet newspaper "Pravda" criticised recent Americans plans for an "International Control Authority" for West Berlin. "Pravda" stated:

"These are utopian plans, directed against the sovereignty of the GDR, and they have been produced at a time when, as US Secretary of State Rusk has admitted, the GDR supervises 95% of the traffic which passes over its territory to West Berlin.

"The question of access to West Berlin is completely clear. The Soviet Government and the Government of the GDR have repeatedly declared that unhindered access is possible. It is possible, but only after agreement has been reached with the GDR as the sovereign controller of the traffic routes and air lines. Without such an agreement it is impossible to settle the question of access. An international supervisory body can be created, but only as an arbitration body to investigate possible difficulties arising from the implementation of the agreement with the GDR on transit traffic. Such a body can only be established when agreement has been reached on the withdrawal of the troops of the three western powers from West Berlin."

The Soviet newspaper suggested that the western troops might be replaced for a certain period by neutral troops, or a United Nations unit.

"No agreement can be reached while West Berlin is utilised as a centre of political intrigue, provocation and enemy propaganda against the socialist states, and in particular against the GDR.

"US Secretary of State Rusk has declared that the withdrawal of occupation troops cannot be a subject for negotiation. What will he talk about then? This declaration is possibly designed to negotiate for the sake of negotiation. Such

Anti-Bomb Marches in W.Germany

Easter Marchers opposing atomic armaments tramped through the streets and highways of West Germany over the long Easter weekend. About 15,000 marchers, double the number who marched last year, started in seventeen separate columns which moved through all ten West German Laender (provinces) and joined at eight final demonstrations on Easter Monday in the following cities: Munich, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Frankfurt (Main), Dortmund, Hanover, Bremen and Hamburg.

One of the largest groups began its march with 1300 participants at the former nazi concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen, now situated next to the big NATO rocket base at Bergen-Hohne. Delegations were present from Britain, Norway, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and France.

All groups grew as they moved from city to city. The marchers who went through the industrial Ruhr area towards the final destination of Dortmund were especially warmly greeted by the people along their route. One large group of Italian labourers working in West Germany decided without a moment's hesitation to join the march when it moved past the barracks where they were living.

Among the most active groups taking part in the marches were the German Peace Union, a recently-formed West German political party, as well as trade union youth and members of the Young Socialists and Falken (a Social Democratic youth organisation), which defied the ban on the march by the Social Democratic Party and the opposition of the trade union federation. Many marchers took up the "Fight Atomic Death" slogan which had been raised and later dropped by the Social Democratic Party. Comments in the West German press tried to ridicule the Easter Marches but were forced to admit their growth. One observer compared them to the Aldermaston marches in the early years as they had begun to pick up momentum.

For an eye-witness account of the Easter Marches, see page 91.

a path will not lead to a rapprochement between the points of view, but to a deepening of the differences."

Political observers in Berlin pointed out that there had been signs of a more realistic American approach to the West Berlin problem a few weeks ago, but that under West German pressure the State Department had apparently modified its proposals. West German political leaders had strongly opposed any sort of compromise which might lead to even the slightest recognition of the GDR. At the beginning of May, for instance, a West German official spokesman made the extraordinary suggestion that an internation commission for the access routes to West Berlin should be established, but that the GDR, the state most intimately concerned, since all access routes run through its territory, should not be represented on such a commission.

A number of differing versions of the new American "plan" for what the "New York Times" has described as a "permanent impermanent" solution for the West Berlin problem have been published in recent weeks. The "New York Times" on April 30th described the aim of this "permanent impermanent" solution as follows:

"The idea would be to re-assure West Berlin's freedom for an indefinite period until an evolving world situation permits German reunification."

Political observers in Berlin pointed out that this formulation coincided closely with the aims of GDR and Soviet policy, which has never threatened "West Berlin's freedom", but which has tried to "bracket out" the West Berlin problem from the European discussion, as a first step towards a relaxation of tension which at a later date could make a German confederation possible.

An apparently reliable summary of American suggestions for a West Berlin settlement was given in the "New York Times" on April 30th by Bonn correspondent Sydney Gruson. He reported:

"From the United States point of view, the heart of the plan is a proposal to create an international authority to guarantee free access to Berlin. West and East Germany, and West and East Berlin would be members of the authority.

"In return, the United States would be willing to accept:

— An exchange of non-aggression declarations between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the members of the Communist Warsaw Pact, which includes East Germany.

— An undertaking to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. In Bonn's view, the major effect of this would be to keep such weapons from the West German armed forces.

— The establishment of 'technical' committees on a parity basis between West and East Germany under the umbrella of a 'permanent' conference of deputy foreign ministers of the United States, Soviet Union, France and Britain . . .

"The controversy provoked by the proposals (in West Germany), continued during the weekend . . . The Free Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats oppose any move that would enhance East Germany's international status above a bearable point or give implicit recognition to the division of Germany and the post-war borders."

Commenting on the situation on May 2nd, the Bonn correspondent of "The Times", London, stated:

"The Chancellor (Adenauer) and his Foreign Minister have made it plain that they realise that there can be no guarantee in Berlin without some counterpart . . . In spite of all the clamour, the Federal Government would far rather have the concession imposed upon it if necessary by the western powers when the time comes than openly share in responsibility with them . . .

"Little or nothing has been done to educate (West) German public opinion to the realities of the situation. The realisation that East Germany may take its place in some organisation side by side with Bonn comes as something of a shock. But . . . the Chancellor realises that if there are any prospects of a real settlement with the Russians, (West) Germany cannot, by stubborn opposition to any concession whatever, stand out in the eyes of all as the country responsible for wrecking them."

HUN—BAITERS?

When West Berlin Mayor Willi Brandt recently visited Britain, he was harried by demontrators who attacked his cold war policy in West Berlin. Readers' letters in various newspapers, including the Socialist "Tribune", suggested that these demonstrations were organised by "anti-Germans". On April 27th "Tribune" printed the following letter refuting this view:

"Your correspondent who suggests that the hostile demonstrations at Herr Brandt's meetings were the actions of 'hun-baiters' is woefully wrong.

"Brandt has infuriated European Socialists because:

(a) He has not spoken out against West German claims upon the territory of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

(b) He has not denounced the fact that former Nazis abound in the West German state machine and in its diplomatic service.

(c) He is completely subservient to American policies on Berlin; and has actively encouraged provocative and rowdy demonstrations on the frontier of the East German Republic in Berlin.

(d) He has so 'watered down' the policy of the Social Democratic Party that it no longer has any Socialist content and doesn't even mention nationalisation (even of Krupps and heavy industry), the extension of the consumer cooperatives movement, or social ownership.

"I am very opposed to Herr Brandt but I have the highest regard for a great many Germans both in the West and the East. I have taken part in the re-education campaign and the 'Save the Children' campaign just after the war.

"Far from being anti-German I look forward to the creation of an eventual Germany that is peaceful, united, neutral and Socialist. In this task we have more allies in the DDR than in the Bundesrepublik. Brandt is a liability and not an asset in our strivings.

Norman L. Stevens
(Chairman, Exmouth Labour Party)."

"The Plague" Still Echoes

Washington Diplomat Mum

GERMAN REPORT's revelations about the high proportion of West German diplomats who were members of the Nazi Party, published on January 19th this year, still continue to echo round the world. Latest magazine to pick up the story is the interesting American monthly "Minority of One", which devoted two full pages of its May issue to a long reprint. The magazine, which describes itself as the "independent monthly for an American alternative", sent a telegram to Wilhelm Grewe, West German Ambassador in Washington, stating: "The East German 'Democratic German Report' of January 19th referred to you as, among others, the former member No. 3,125,858 of the Nazi Party. We should appreciate your denial or confirmation of your former membership of the Nazi Party, and any comment you may wish to make."

In its May issue the magazine reproduced this telegram, and commented:

"Grewe did not respond to our telegram. It is credible that self-incriminating silence, which still leaves room for reasonable doubt, is viewed by the West German Ambassador as preferable to a manly confirmation of his Nazi past. Certainly, a denial would be viewed by him as preferable, if such a denial could validly be made. Our readers will draw their own conclusion from the lack of response to our telegram.

"The source of the material here is an East German publication. It is probable that it is a Communist source. This does not indicate unreliability. Anybody who suggests that the East German origin of the information renders discussion of it unnecessary is indulging in manipulative diversion. 'The Minority of One' will be glad to publish any factual denial, confirmation, correction or comment on the information, from any official American or West German source. Should no contradictory statement be forthcoming, there will be no choice but to assume that the unchallenged information is correct."

The magazine "Minority of One" is sponsored, amongst others, by Dr Albert Schweitzer and Professor Linus Pauling.

New Depots for Wehrmacht

A number of new depots in Britain will soon be made available to the West German Army, Navy and Air Force, the London "Daily Express" reported on April 28th. The new depots will include Royal Naval dockyards on the South Coast. The "Daily Express" stated:

"The advance party of a German military liaison staff will leave for Britain next week. It will inspect depot facilities in the North of England and Scotland. To be stored in Britain: engines and spare parts for the German strike plane, the Starfighter, tank and armoured car engines and spares, ammunition of all kinds, from heavy artillery to tommyguns, and a wide range of equipment and clothing."

Nazi Minister Sues Resisters

A West German minister, who was sacked by Adenauer in 1960 because his nazi past was too notorious, has filed a claim for "damages" against the West German newspaper which played a major part in his downfall.

The ex-minister, Professor Theodor Oberlaender, was West German "Refugee Minister" from 1953 to 1960. In 1959 the newspaper "Die Tat", organ of anti-nazi resistance fighters in West Germany, published documentary details of Oberlaender's nazi past, including in particular his part in the liquidation of Jews in the Ukrainian city of Lvov. On April 29th 1960 he was sentenced to life imprisonment in absentia by the Supreme Court of the GDR, and a few days later Adenauer sacked him.

At the beginning of May 1962, Oberlaender filed a claim for damages of 50,000 marks (nearly £5000) against the editor and publisher of "Die Tat", claiming that the disclosures published by the paper had lost him his job as minister, and thus caused him financial loss.

Czar Lucius Clay

US General Lucius D. Clay was awarded the freedom of the city of West Berlin on May 5th, after he had been recalled from the city because his policy of hotting up the cold war no longer coincides with State Department tactics. Historians state that the last foreigner to be awarded the freedom of the city was Russian Czar Nicolas I, most reactionary of all the Czars, and popularly known as the "Gendarme of Europe".

New Connection to Airport

East Berlin's big Schoenefeld Airport, with air connections to all parts of the world, is now connected to its own city centre by two new traffic arteries. In the past few months a new extension to the city's municipal railroad system had tied the air terminal to the main transportation network. On April 28th a new stretch of highway, 2½ miles in length, was opened to traffic, thus ending a nasty bottleneck in car connections between Schoenefeld and the city's centre. Both the municipal railway spur and the highway, with all necessary stations, bridges and underpasses, were constructed in a few months, despite winter weather and poor clay and marsh areas which the new routes crossed.

A Big Wheel

Stories on big wheels and on what ordinary people in the GDR do with their evenings, articles on economic cooperation among the socialist countries and on the latest GDR film comedy are all features of the May issue of GDR Review, monthly illustrated magazine on life in the GDR. For sample copies and details on how to subscribe, write

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German Democratic Republic

Please specify whether you wish the magazine in English, French, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Spanish or German.

This offer applies only to readers outside the GDR.

UNIONS HARRIED IN W.GERMANY
— Protest to United Nations

The GDR Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) protested to the UN in late April against West German violations of trade union rights and democratic principles. U Thant, Acting General Secretary, was requested to distribute the FDGB memorandum at the 33rd Session of the UN's Economic and Social Council.

After pointing out that West Germany thwarted UN principles by making territorial claims to parts of other countries and refusing to participate in an atom-free zone and other disarmament measures, the memorandum cited a long list of cases where trade union rights had been violated in West Germany.

Most striking case quoted was the decision of the Nuremberg Labour Court that 63 workers in a shoe factory must pay damages of 150,000 marks (£14,000) for striking with 391 other workers against sweat-shop methods employed in the plant. Three workers had been driven to suicide in one year, pregnant employees had been forced to work at unhealthy jobs, and many women had been ordered to work at machines from which safety devices had been removed When the case was reviewed, the Nuremberg courts not only affirmed the original sentence, but decided that the leather-workers union must pay an additional 200,000 marks damages to the firm for having supported the strike.

Other violations of trade union rights cited included the sacking of West German trade union officials for normal union activities like recruiting members or insisting on compliance with Factory Acts; an 8-month jail sentence for a union member who attended a meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions; and a 19-month sentence for a union member who visited the GDR.

The memorandum quoted West German trade union leader Adolf Kummernuss, chairman of the Municipal Workers Union (ÖTV), as stating on April 16th 1961: "The Federal Republic is becoming the classical land of defamation. Herr Strauss (West German Defence Minister) describes anyone who 'weakens the western defensive forces' as 'a potential war criminal'. Whoever refuses conscription Strauss calls a 'coward'; because Nobel Prize winner Otto Hahn objected to atomic weapons for conscientious reasons, Strauss called him 'an old fool'.

The memorandum then pointed out that in the past ten years, at least 500,000 people had been subjected in West Germany to direct or indirect legal and police persecution because of their political opinions and in this way frightened, intimidated or pressured.

In conclusion, the Free German Trade Union Federation demanded that all workers and trade unionists imprisoned for struggling for peace and international understanding be freed immediately, and that the West German trade unions be granted full rights and privileges to carry out their activities both in the factories and elsewhere.

Standing For Election a Crime?

A veteran anti-Nazi who spent the entire Hitler period in prison now faces another prison sentence because he stood for election to the West German Bundestag last September. Karl Schabrod, chairman of the Communist Party parliamentary group in North Rhein-Westfalia before the party was banned in 1956, campaigned for election last autumn in the name of the "Communist Electoral Group". He is now being tried for this offence together with Emil Sander, who helped him form the electoral group.

The trial, which began on May 3rd in the Political Chamber of the Dusseldorf Provincial Court, is expected to last till June 28th. The charges against Schabrod, Sander and Wolfgang Schroeder, a third defendant who published a "ban-the-bomb" newspaper, include "conspiracy", "ringleadership in an anti-constitutional organisation", "anti-constitutional writings" and the "continuation of the activities of the forbidden Communist Party".

The men have been held in jail for investigation since July 22nd. Schabrod and Sander have sued the West German Government for violating the Constitution by dissolving their electoral group, and have tried in vain to postpone their trial until either the West German Bundestag or the Constitutional Court decides on the case.

Karl Schabrod, who is over 60, was arrested in 1933 one month after the nazis took power and kept in jails and penitentiaries till the end of the war. He was jailed again in West Germany in 1958 and faces an indeterminate jail sentence if he is convicted in the current trial.

Four Women Go On Trial

Four West German women, one of them a victim of nazi prisons and tortures, went on trial on April 24th at Lueneburg in West Germany on charges of "illegal conspiracy" and "endangering the state". The indictment charged that the women had taken part in organised opposition to West German rearmament as leaders of the Democratic Womens' Association. This organisation, at present forbidden in West Germany, was completely legal at the time the four women held office.

Herta Duerrbeck, 47, was arrested in 1934 by the nazis, tortured and sentenced to 17 months imprisonment for "high treason" for distributing anti-nazi leaflets. Her husband, also an active anti-fascist, died shortly after the war as a result of years of mistreatment by the nazis. After the war she served for some years as judge in the Hanover administrative court and was an elected member of the Lower Saxony provincial legislature from 1952 to 1955. In 1955, she was arrested for her peace activities and jailed in the same prison where she had been held by the nazis.

Emmi Meyer, 48, another defendant, was also an active anti-nazi. In an air-raid on March 22nd 1945 she had lost her four-year-old son as well as her mother and grandmother. In a statement replying to the indictment, Frau Meyer said, "I now have two children again. I have worked together with millions of other women so that they may live in peace with all other children, and I shall always continue working for this goal."

The other two defendants, Lotte Duepree, 51, and Erika Krueger, 41, stated that their experiences in World War Two had made them resolve to fight against future wars.

The trial was still in progress as we went to press.

Clothes and the Woman

By Helga Preuss

You would scarcely think that the old building in the north of East Berlin shelters the largest clothing factory in the GDR: the nationally-owned Treff-Modelle plant — and entering it, you are surprised to find so many big, well-lit workshops. The fashion-show presented to the journalists who had been invited to visit the plant was another pleasant surprise. The fashionable casual coats shown were just what the women of the GDR want, and were well up to international standards in style. This is shown by the fact that many orders come in from abroad, the factory manager explained. Treff-Modelle exports dresses and coats to West Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Two collections of models had just gone out: one to be shown in Prague and the other at the Leipzig Fair.

Export Snag

I know that one of the difficulties our clothing industry suffers from is that the GDR still has to export many of its best products to pay for imports, like Britain did in the late 1940s. So I asked immediately if these coats are sold in the GDR, too, and how much they cost. (The question was near to my heart, because I had just been running around and trying to buy a coat. After searching for quite a time I succeeded in getting a coat not quite as nice and not quite as cheap as the ones shown here.) The manager told me that only a limited number of the models shown were for sale in the GDR. I only could sigh: "I wish it were more!"

Then the manager gave some details about the factory: a number of smaller clothing workshops united after the end of the Second World War and formed the basis for this big factory. In 1952 they joined another big clothing plant. 80% of the workers are women, and half of the foremen and technicians are women. But in the central management of the whole firm, consisting of three plants, there is only one woman. This shows that even under a socialist system, with full equality for women, they may have a long struggle to get their fair share of responsible posts. If there are 80% women amongst the workers, then women should hold 8 out of 10 leading positions if the proportion were to be mathematically correct. All sorts of excuses are made, but there is certainly something wrong with the present situation.

Do the women working in this factory just accept this situation? No, they know very well that a change should be made. Many of them are studying to qualify for higher posts (a number are already qualified) and hope that the recent Government steps towards making the equality of the sexes a reality will bear fruit.

Good Meals

What facilities are provided for the women working in Treff-Modelle? They can have cheap, good meals in the canteen, costing about one British shilling and providing a choice between three dishes; they can get sandwiches at the work bench and can do a lot of their shopping inside the factory; the plant also provides repair-shops for stockings and electrical equipment. They can send their children to the factory kindergarten, shortly to be enlarged. To improve conditions for mothers who are studying while they work, the plant will soon provide a "boarding nursery school" where they can leave young children from Monday to Saturday each week.

Every woman who wants to study is given every facility in the factory. The aim of all unskilled women should be to get their diploma as skilled workers. This qualifies them to take on more responsible and better paid work. For the skilled workers there are courses which enable them to become foremen and correspondence courses to become engineers.

Plant Manager

At the fashion show I was sitting beside a friendly woman of 39, Frau Ursula Kahl, the manager of one of the three plants which belong to the factory. She told me her story: she was the daughter of a janitor who had certainly not the means to pay for a high-school education for his daughter. So she had to learn a trade and chose to become a dress-maker, and even this was difficult to achieve under the conditions of Nazi Germany. After 1945 the factory she worked for gave her the opportunity to take part in a course to become a foreman.

Then, after a five-year correspondence course she became a "clothing engineer", and for the past year she has been manager of one of the three plants. (The term "clothing engineer" may sound as though Frau Kahl spends her time screwing together suits of armour, but this is what a qualified cloak and gown expert is called in German.) She was very aware of the problems of the staff and is always trying to make improvements for the women in her department.

While she was telling her story we were led by the plant-manager through the departments and were now at the place where the apprentices worked. They do work in a separate department, but help — according to their abilities — in the task of production. I saw them sew coloured summer dresses and warm winter skirts. To my question "Do you like the skirt you are sewing?" one of the girls answered "I wouldn't buy it!" When I asked her how she had decided to take up this work, she replied: "I want to learn to sew my own dresses myself!" ...

Prototypes

We moved on and saw prototypes being examined: new models were looked over for mistakes before going into series production. I looked in vain for one of the workers or apprentices in the approval commission. Were they not interested in their future production? On the contrary! I learned later that they often have good ideas for improving or simplifying production when they work with the models. Another good reason for consulting the workers would be because they are also consumers, "customers" of the plant. The plant management would have a chance both to hear the ideas for improving production at first hand and to hear the voice of the customer — if the women were asked to take part in the commission. Another advantage would be that young girls such as the one I talked with could criticise models they don't like (such as the skirt she was sewing) before they went into production. And one more advantage would be that the

women's interest in their work would be stimulated in such a way that their qualification would seem to them only natural and the financial benefit would be only of secondary importance. So there are at least three reasons for letting the women take part in the commission that examines the prototypes. It would seem to be time for the management to take some action.

We walked into another big room, where the patterns were copied. This work is done on specially-lit tables, an invention of a team in the plant. I asked for the approximate salary of the workers who did the copying: 600 to 650 marks per month (about £14 weekly). That is approximately the wage earned in other departments, but there are considerably higher wages for workers in difficult jobs.

New Material

In the cutting room my attention was naturally drawn to the different kinds of material used. It was pastel-coloured, fluffy, smooth and soft to the touch. Asking for the name of this material, names like "Welwara, Prelana, Malimo" were thrown at me. But soon I found out what the names stand for. Malimo, for instance, is a material created by an engineer in the GDR, who won the National Prize for his invention. This material is produced by a technique combining sewing and weaving. A machine able to produce 8 metres of woven material in a certain time can produce 100 metres of Malimo in the same time. This certainly makes the production of material cheaper and will help to meet the need for good, warm material in the GDR.

After rooting enthusiastically for quite a time in the pastel-coloured, good, warm material of which so much can be produced, I recalled that I actually am not quite used to this level of colour, quality, cheapness and modern style when I buy in our shops. And I inquired how this came about. In reply I was told the following story: "On a certain day masses of old men appear in this room. They look at the models severely and they often shake their wise heads sadly and say: 'Our customers won't like that one!' This is the power which stands between the producer and the consumer — the representatives of the retail trade organisation. They refuse many modern and tasteful models for the reason that 'our women would not wear such things'." And I was shown some models which they refused: the sight made my hair stand on end: not only I but many of my acquaintances had hunted for a skirt like that for day and days, without success. Here it hung — refused and sad — there we stood — furious and sad — in front of the shops where we were told again: "We don't have skirts like this!"

Old Fogeys

But I could not believe that the decision about the things we women want or do not want to wear was left to a bunch of old-fashioned old men. Frau Kahl smiled and told me the following story: She once was interested in getting a job as a buyer and replied to an advertisement from a big department store run by the GDR trade organisation. She told them about her qualifications and about her training as a dress-maker. The answer was: "Dress-makers can't become buyers — only buyers can become buyers!"

We had seen a good deal of the factory and were sitting in one of the ateliers to speak about our impressions. We, the visitors, and the colleagues from the Treff-Modelle often discovered that we had exactly the same wishes — and often discovered, too, why our wishes were not fulfilled. Here is one example: We all would like now and again to buy a very cheap dress or an inexpensive jacket which can be worn for a season and then discarded; but it is very difficult to get this sort of thing in the GDR.

The colleagues producing for us the dresses and jackets would have liked to turn out some cheaper dresses or coats. But even using inexpensive material this cannot be done because the GDR has rather inflexible laws about quality. Even cheap material has to be made up with the same carefulness and quality as is used with expensive material; and this means that labour costs and other costs boost the price out of all proportion.

There is obviously a lot of work here for the women's organisations. The basic problems of socialist production have been solved, or are on the way to solution in the GDR: everyone has enough food and clothing. Now we want to be dressed better, cheaper and more fashionably, and it is up to us, the consumers, to see that the factories and the shops provide what we need.

Mayor's Meeting

More than 80 mayors and city councillors from 12 European countries met in Dresden on April 28th and 29th to discuss the role of the cities and their governments in maintaining peace. Among the guests who came to the GDR for the meeting were William Callow, Lord Mayor of Coventry, Mayor Dozza of Bologna, Mayor Dynkin of Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad), Mayor Budsky of Prague and Mayor Gregoire of Montreuil, France.

The participants at the conference discussed methods of increasing co-operation between their cities and adopted resolutions backing a German peace treaty and the peaceful settlement of the West Berlin question.

In a speech to the conference, Mayor Gregoire of Montrueil mentioned that he had been a prisoner of war of the nazis from 1940 to 1945 in the area near Dresden. In an attempted escape at that time, a peasant family had helped him, Gregoire said, and he thanked the Dresden city authorities who helped him find the family once more. Their action, he said, was an example of the kind of friendship between Germans and French which can succeed in a common endeavour to keep the peace in Europe.

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Marching through West Germany

By Fred and Betty Dallas

Fred and Betty Dallas are English folksingers who wrote popular peace songs like "The Family of Man" and "Strontium 90" and have taken part in every Aldermaston march until their visit to West Germany this Easter.

In many ways it was just like Easter, 1958, that first year when we marched from London to Aldermaston, singing all the way, not too sure of how many people would turn out, wondering what the passers-by would think, wondering if we could stand the pace.

One thing we'll say for the German anti-nuclear marchers, they've got more go than their British counterparts. In one day on the Frankfurt march we covered 36 kilometres (that's over 20 miles by our reckoning) and at a pace that would have caused an immediate sit-down in Britain.

But seriously, it was a wonderful experience for us to participate in this counter-blast to the cold war politicians who have most of the say in West Germany. Both of us are old enough to remember the war, and yet here we were, marching side by side with German young people who had enough intelligence to cut right through the cold war propaganda.

As in Britain, the bulk of the marchers were young, but nevertheless there were conspicuous exceptions to this rule. One that comes immediately to mind was of the two old gentlemen, elegant in their Sunday best and tight shoes, who carried very solemnly a placard with the message "Thou shalt not kill". They came from a religious organisation.

Of course, we are primarily singers, not politicians, and it was as singers that we had been invited to take part in the marches. The previous year, we had toured West Germany singing the songs from Aldermaston to gatherings of anything from a dozen to several hundred. Then, the Aldermaston-approach to music on the march, combining infectious melodies and rhythms with deadly serious lyrics, was completely unknown to the Germans. But they had belied the common stereotype of the Germans as a solemn race, and roared out "Ban the bomb" as loudly as (and perhaps more tunefully than) any Aldermaston marchers.

This year we had a pleasant surprise, for the songs had taken root. Translations had been prepared and good ones too, most singable. The Germans were singing "Hörst du nicht H-Bomben-Donner" to the tune of "Don't you hear H-Bombs thunder", and they had translated our own song, "Strontium 90", too.

More important, perhaps, they had also produced some songs of their own. Some of them were in the rather heavier, Germanic tradition. But undoubtedly the hit of the marches was a song called "Geh mit uns", which we have translated as "Come with us":

"Come with us, whoever you may be.
Come with us, whatever you believe.
Come with us, and do not close your eyes
Like the men who lead the world to destruction with their lies."

We hope to sing our translation of this song at CND events in Britain. This is the sort of import we are glad to welcome from Germany, rather than the Panzers who are using our territory to train for war.

These musical steps forward were of great interest to us, paralleling our own experiences at Aldermaston, but equally heartening were the small signs that the West German peace movement is overcoming the divisions that have weakened it in the past. Certainly, as in Britain, the Easter Marches are acting as a great rallying point, something which is uniting people of all different beliefs and strengthening their work.

This is having an important effect upon the by-standers. Last year, we're told, there was some hostility, that people rejected or threw away the leaflets they were handed about the purpose of the march. This year, we saw little hostility and most of the people read the leaflets or folded them up carefully and pocketed them, presumably for later reading.

Of course, the marchers had their difficulties. The leaders of the Social Democrats prohibited their members from taking part, and by their direction the socialist youth organisation, the Falkens, did likewise. But many Falkens ignored this ban, and marched with us, singing lustily.

There were also the usual pinpricks of police prohibitions, one of which was a ban, on the Hamburg march, on banners with the slogan: "Training in atomic weapons is training for murder".

More serious were some acts of hooliganism which could have had quite serious consequences. Cars were broken into, banners were stolen, and in some cases brakes were damaged.

We were not the only Britons participating in the marches. On the Frankfurt march we met a number of students from the London School of Economics, while on the Hamburg march we met some English lads working for the International Voluntary Service, as well as Danes and French. A large party of Danes in a bus was turned back at the border by the West German police.

One of the main speakers we heard in Hamburg was our own Fenner Brockway, who recalled from his own long experience past activities of Germans for peace, going right back to the Kiel sailors' mutiny which helped to end World War I.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is rapidly becoming truly international, with activities in every country where there are proposals to station atomic weapons. The West German campaign, in a country where daily we read of proposals to put these murderous weapons in the hands of Nazis and ex-Nazis, is perhaps the most important of these. And probably the most important slogan carried on all the marches was "An atom-free zone in Central Europe", a proposal which has the full support of the German Democratic Republic, but which is strongly resisted by the Government of the Federal Republic.

The West German Easter Marches are not yet strong enough, perhaps, to change the policy of their country, but in the face of a constant barrage of cold-war propaganda, they are getting stronger.

Productivity Takes Big Jump

Productivity in the industry of the GDR increased by the big figure of 9% in the first quarter of 1962, it was officially announced in Berlin on May 1st; total industrial production rose in the same quarter by 7%.

These new figures show that the upswing in GDR production, which slowed in 1961, owing to a number of factors such as industrial reorganisation to off-set a threatened western trade boycott, and special measures before and after the closing of the Berlin border, has now been resumed.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

It is always fascinating to see a myth being made, but in my experience it is almost impossible to catch it in the moment of its making. The reason for this of course is that when the first step is taken, nobody knows whether it is going to catch on, and when a myth has got well and truly launched, it is almost impossible to track it back to its first origins. In fact almost the only person I can recall who has taken the trouble to track down some of the modern propaganda myths was Lord Ponsonby, in his fascinating book "Falsehood in Wartime" (Allen & Unwin, London 1928). In his book he tells of many of the lies spread by both sides in connection with "atrocities" in the First World War. Most of his examples are too long and complicated to be quoted here, but one specimen is short, though not sweet. It concerns the capture of Antwerp by the German Army in 1914:

When the fall of Antwerp got known, the church bells were rung (meaning in Germany).

"Kölnische Zeitung"

According to the Kölnische Zeitung, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken.

"Le Matin"

According to what Le Matin has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven away from their places.

"The Times"

According to what the Times has heard from Cologne via Paris, the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour.

"Corriére della Sera"

According to information to the Corrière della Sera from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down.

"Le Matin"

That was in the First World War, of course. In the Second World War the atrocities committed by the Nazis were so vast and ghastly that there was no need to "heat up" the stories.

A more modern myth, which has caught on very successfully in a lot of newspapers which should know better, is that the German Democratic Republic is governed by something called the "Pankow Government". As GERMAN REPORT has got tired of pointing out, Pankow is an inner suburb of the eastern part of Berlin, and not a single office of the GDR Government happens to be stationed there.

Someday when I have lots of time, I intend to get out all the old newspaper files, and find out who the bright western propagandist was who, in late 1949, stuck the name "Pankow", with derogatory intent, on the GDR Government. The reason behind the launching of this particular myth is clear enough: the West German Government was established in the sleepy country town of Bonn, largely because Adenauer lived there and did not want to move; and one month later, the Government of the German Democratic Republic was established in Berlin. This alert, and as yet unidentified West German propagandist saw that the GDR Government might well become known far and wide as the "Berlin Government", and this would give the GDR the propaganda advantage of becoming identified with the traditional capital of Germany. The myth-maker hit on calling it the "Pankow Government", probably because there is a vaguely "un-German" and Slav tinge to the name Pankow, and the name has stuck.

Mouthful

At this point I should just add that as a journalist I know how necessary it is to have short names for things, and "Government of the German Democratic Republic" is a hell of a mouthful, and quite unusable in headlines; but if you want a short version, and don't wish to run the danger of confusion, why not call it the "East Berlin Government", which is very little longer, and probably more understandable to most people.

After this long and meandering introduction, let me get round to the real subject of this notebook, which is the fact that I have the feeling that I have spotted a myth in the process of being launched. Like all good myths, it is presented quite blatantly as incontrovertible and established fact. Mr Cyrus Sulzberger, senior foreign correspondent of the "New York Times", writing on April 28th, states:

"Clay relieved the Russians of any thought that our resolve was crumbling. Last October 23, when they moved tanks to the Friedrichstrasse in a hostile way, he sent American tanks to oppose them. This was the only direct confrontation between Soviet and US forces during the cold war. The Russians saw the point. They retreated..."

It was all very straightforward, according to Mr Sulzberger. Nasty Russians sent up tanks, for no apparent reason, and General Lucius D. Clay, President Kennedy's special representative in West Berlin, called in the Marines. Hurra for General Clay, and the myth is all ready to be written into the history books.

The only weak point in Mr Sulzberger's all-American story is that it is completely untrue. He can, incidentally, check the details in his own paper for the month of October 1961, and he will find that what really happened was this:

On October 22nd, an American in civilian clothes attempted to enter the GDR at the Friedrichstrasse Frontier Point without showing his passport, as all persons in civilian clothes must do when crossing international frontiers. US tanks drove up to the frontier to provide a "demonstration of strength" as the "New York Times" reported next day, and a squad of US Military Police with fixed bayonets made an extraordinary armed sally into East Berlin.

On the following four days, US tanks loomed at the border, and small bodies of US troops made repeated sallies into GDR territory. Thanks to the good sense and discipline of the GDR frontier guards, there were no incidents, but the situation was rapidly becoming intolerable, and finally in the afternoon of October 27th, five days after the Americans launched the series of provocations, Soviet tanks moved near to the border.

Next day, both Soviet and American tanks moved away from the border, and since that time, I am glad to say, the US Goverment has been able to prevent General Clay from playing any more dangerous games in the centre of Berlin. It is really very illuminating to compare what really happened with what Mr Sulzberger made of it. And as I said at the beginning, it is fascinating to watch a myth being created.

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